

**Archery Trade Association · Bear Trust International · Boone and Crockett Club ·
Bowhunting Preservation Alliance · Campfire Club of America · Congressional Sportsmen's
Foundation · Conservation Force · Dallas Safari Club · Foundation for North American
Wild Sheep · Houston Safari Club · International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
· National Rifle Association · National Shooting Sports Foundation · National Trappers
Association · National Wild Turkey Federation · North American Bear Foundation · Quality
Deer Management Association · Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation · Safari Club
International · Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership · Whitetails Unlimited ·
Wildlife Management Institute**

December 6, 2005

Honorable Greg Walden, Chairman
Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
Committee on Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Walden,

The above listed conservation organizations, representing millions of sportsmen, are writing in support of HR 4200, the Forest Emergency Restoration and Research Act of 2005. This legislation's commitment to timely responses to catastrophic events by allowing for rapid restoration of ecosystems, utilization of damaged trees before they lose economic value, protection of adjacent lands from subsequent wildfires, insect infestations and disease outbreaks, and the opportunity for public participation in recovery planning is consistent with our members' expectations and is simply common sense.

As you know, the number and magnitude of catastrophic events such as wildfire and windstorm causing severe damage to forests has increased in recent decades, resulting in serious environmental, social and economic consequences at both the local and national levels. These catastrophic events devastate ecosystems, severely compromise their capacity to recover, delay reestablishment of forests, increase the land's susceptibility to repeated wildfires, and the potential of insect infestations and disease outbreaks, which all increase damage to key watersheds and critical wildlife habitats.

The authorities currently available to the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to react to catastrophic events do not provide for timely and effective response activities, and the required review processes frequently result in delays beyond the window of opportunity available for effective restoration.

This legislation would remedy the situation by providing the authority for timely and effective responses to catastrophic events. The land management agencies could rapidly respond to the unique characteristics of each event and utilize damaged trees before they lose all economic

value, with the ultimate goal of restoring these ecosystems for maximum conservation of fish and wildlife.

We support the bill's provisions to increase scientific research on the best methods to recover ecosystems damaged by catastrophic events. Finally, the provisions that provide for involvement of state, local and tribal authorities in evaluating damage from catastrophic events and formulating appropriate response plans ensures that the interests of local communities, conservation organizations and adjacent landowners are heard and considered.

HR 4200 would enhance the ability of our membership's ongoing efforts to protect and improve habitat, responsibly manage and conserve fish and wildlife and ensure the overall health of our forest ecosystems. We stand ready to help in the passage of the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act of 2005.

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